

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 70

By Kyle

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of the Honorable Charles H. O'Brien, former Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Charles H. O'Brien, who so ably served the people of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, known to all as "the Judge," Charles H. O'Brien was remembered by his colleagues and close friends as a dedicated and highly respected jurist and as a man of great integrity with a warm and caring personality; and

WHEREAS, Charles Herbert O'Brien was born on July 30, 1920, in Orange, New Jersey, to Herbert Rodgers and Agnes Stidman (Montanya) O'Brien. Receiving his primary, secondary, and higher education at schools in the eastern United States, he became a Tennessee resident in 1945; and

WHEREAS, a member of this nation's greatest generation, Judge O'Brien proudly served as an infantryman with the United States Army during World War II, seeing action in the European Theater; and

WHEREAS, pursuing a legal career after his military service, Judge O'Brien completed his legal education in 1947 at Cumberland School of Law, then located in Lebanon, Tennessee, and upon his admittance to the bar, opened a law practice in Memphis in 1948; and

WHEREAS, called again to military duty in 1950 during the Korean War, Charles O'Brien served at General Headquarters, United Nations Command, Tokyo, Japan, under General Douglas MacArthur before retiring from military service with the rank of First Lieutenant in 1953; and

WHEREAS, a respected trial lawyer and prominent member of the Memphis community, Charles O'Brien won election to the House of Representatives of the 83rd Tennessee General Assembly, representing a portion of Shelby County from 1963 to 1965, and returned to

Nashville as a member of the State Senate of the 84th Tennessee General Assembly, having won election to that chamber to represent the good people of Shelby and Tipton counties; and

WHEREAS, during his time in the General Assembly, Judge O'Brien pursued and supported legislation to establish a consolidated regional judicial system, to create a vocational training system, and to exempt prescription drugs from sales taxes; and

WHEREAS, marrying his beloved wife, Anna Belle Clement, on November 9, 1966, Judge O'Brien relocated to beautiful O'Brien Harbor on Lake Tansi in Cumberland County, Tennessee, and established a law practice there in 1967; and

WHEREAS, recognized for his wisdom and legal expertise, in 1970 Charles H. O'Brien was elected to the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, a position he would hold for the next seventeen years, winning reelection in 1974 and 1982; and

WHEREAS, in the culmination of a distinguished judicial career, on August 17, 1987, Governor Ned McWherter appointed Charles H. O'Brien to a seat on the esteemed Tennessee Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, Justice O'Brien rose to the post of Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court before taking a much-deserved retirement from the bench in 1994; and

WHEREAS, Justice Charles H. O'Brien was a respected member of the American Bar Association, the Tennessee Bar Association, and the Cumberland County Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, active in his community, Charles H. O'Brien was a 50-year member of the American Legion, a star on the stage with the Cumberland County Playhouse, and a faithful member of Lake Tansi Community Church; and

WHEREAS, in heartfelt tribute, Governor Phil Bredesen said, "Judge O'Brien was so highly respected by everyone. He was an institution in our state. He will be remembered for a very long time and I was proud to know him and call him my friend"; and

WHEREAS, endearingly humble and unassuming, Charles H. O'Brien was just a common man who by most standards accomplished lofty heights. Thing is, unless you knew the Judge personally, you never knew about these feats. And that was the way he liked it; and

WHEREAS, a devoted husband, Charles H. O'Brien enjoyed the love and companionship of his beloved wife of 40 years, Anna Belle Clement O'Brien, and he was the proud father of Diane Solomon and Dr. Heather O'Brien Hahn, and doting grandfather of Kerry

Parker, David Solomon, Tommy Solomon, Micah Hahn, Avi Hahn, and Mara Hahn, and great-grandchildren, Hunter Parker, Caroline Parker, and Charles Jackson Solomon; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his son, Steve O'Brien; his parents, Herbert and Agnes O'Brien; sister, Theda Orvidson; and brother, Francis Edward O'Brien. Judge Charles O'Brien will be sadly mourned but fondly remembered by a vast multitude of dear friends, former colleagues, and admirers across Tennessee and this great nation; and

WHEREAS, Charles H. O'Brien leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the extraordinary life of an exceptional public servant, constant friend, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of the Honorable Charles H. O'Brien, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Judge Charles H. O'Brien.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to the family of Judge O'Brien, with this final clause omitted from such copy.